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THE STORY OF
ST. PETER & ST. PAUL
CHURCH OF ENGLAND JUNIOR SCHOOL
BEXHILL-ON-SEA



SCHOOL CHURCH, & STATE.

BY

CANON C. G. EARWAKER, B.A.

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FROM THE RECTOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SCHOOL MANAGERS

As we reach our 21st Birthday, it is good to be reminded of the traditions we have inherited from former Church Schools in Bexhill, and also of the fore-sight, generosity and hard work which led to the building of this School. We are greatly indebted to Canon Earwaker for providing us with this valuable record of our early years.

"One of the finest School buildings in Sussex", was the verdict of a County official at the opening ceremony. We continue to acknowledge with much gratitude all that they, and their magnificent site and surroundings, have to offer to succeeding generations. But we have still greater cause for thanksgiving as we reflect on the lively and happy community of staff and children, which is the School as we now know it, and as we recall the devoted service of many.

Our growing years have been blessed in countless ways. May we continue to build into the future on the Christian traditions and convictions, which we have received from the past.

MICHAEL TOWNROE.

FROM THE HEADMASTER

1977 is a significant year in the history of the School. For twenty-one years it has served the children of the town, creating a strong academic record under the caring eyes of the five Parishes who have helped to maintain it, and its coming of age coincides with a major educational change in the form of Comprehensive Education.

Having reached the age of majority, the school finds itself in the position of admitting the children of former pupils, and it is pleasing to note this steady growth of family connections.

It is from a firm foundation that the school looks towards the future challenge of the next two decades, hoping for a stability of educational thought nationally, and a philosophy which can stand the test of time.

ALAN MORTON.

1. IN DAYS GONE BY

"In England popular education originated with no statesman and was nurtured for no particular end. It sprang from the action of the Church and the philanthropy of individuals". So declared Mr. W. F. Cowper-Temple in the House of Commons on the 18th February 1857. The truth of that declaration, made more than a century ago, is clearly revealed in the story of the Church Schools of our land.

Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury in the 7th century and King Alfred the Great in the 9th century may rightly be regarded as the fathers of English education, but not until quite modern times has our Parliament planned and administered a national educational system. Thus it is not an overstatement to claim that for at least a thousand years such teaching as was available for the boys and girls of England sprang from the caring concern of the Church of the land.

Up to the time of the Reformation places of learning of many different kinds existed. There were the choir schools linked with the Cathedrals and greater parish churches; the monastic schools; the parish primary schools taught by a 'clerk'; the guild and chantry schools; the ancient grammar schools and so on; and of course all the time there was the regular week-by-week teaching work of the parish priest for the children of his parochial flock.

There was no organised scheme or plan for any of this teaching work. Local concern brought these teaching institutions into being and the State played no part at all. Education was entirely in the hands of the Church. As far back as 1410 A.D. the King's Bench Division had disclaimed any jurisdiction in matters of education on the part of the State. Such responsibility, it declared, pertained to the Spirituality and the task was diligently and gladly carried out by the Church often with episcopal oversight and inspection.

Here in Bexhill, in the year 1453 A.D., in accordance with the Will of Lady Joan Brenchley, a chantry chapel was added to the north side of St. Peter's Church. This was planned as a memorial to her parents, William and Margery Batesford, and we know that her wishes were duly carried out. But for less than a hundred years was the Batesford Chapel used as such. By the decree of the avaricious King Henry VIII, who desired the endowments to enrich his depleted coffers, all chantry chapels were suppressed. Many were despoiled and some even destroyed. Fortunately the Chantry in St. Peter's Church escaped and a later incumbent, Dr. Thomas Pye (1561-1609), concerned to continue the teaching tradition of the Church, used the chapel as a school room. He was a young and vigorous parish priest, indeed he was only twenty-eight when he became Rector, and his concern for the educational needs of the boys and girls of Bexhill has been a continuing feature of the ministries of those priests who have come after him.

What has been said so far reveals quite plainly the unplanned and voluntary nature of the schooling available to children and this continued to be the case right up to the middle of the 19th century. Rather as the acorn hidden in the ground and putting down invisible roots will in time produce a mighty oak, so the teaching work of the Church, quietly working through the long years, has made possible the vast educational 'set up' of the 20th century.

It is fashionable to scoff at the Victorians, but an impartial view of this period shows at once how much of lasting value was fashioned during this long reign. The 19th century reveals an immense amount of effort on the part of church societies and individuals to improve the quality of life for the people of the nation and especially the children. The influence of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel led to the foundation of the National Society for Education. This church society, together with the British and Foreign Schools Society (a mainly interdenominational body), were the principal agents in promoting a public concern for popular education which led to the setting up of School Boards by the State in 1870 — just a century ago.

The National Society also undertook for the first time the formal training of teachers and in 1841 founded St. Mark's College, Chelsea as the first Church Training College — a step in due course to be followed by the State also. The Sunday School movement of Robert Raikes of Gloucester, himself a product of a Cathedral choir school, and the educational work of the great John Wesley and his brother were additional factors in creating a fresh climate of opinion as to the urgent need for a national system of schools to be sponsored by the Government.

In 1833 a government census revealed that more than a million children were in Church Schools, but even in claiming this achievement one is compelled to admit the other side of the story. One quotation is enough. "Out of every ten children of school age, four went to no school at all, three went to Sunday School only and two attended a 'Dame' or a 'Day' School". These were the figures for Manchester, already feeling the effects of rapid urbanisation and the industrial revolution, and no doubt figures were slightly better in rural areas like Sussex where the parish was and still is a viable community.

But the national picture was both depressing and not a little frightening. Such a writer as Charles Dickens in his social novels (and even more vividly for us today on the television screen) has shown how much the nation's children needed a Charter. It was sadly true that the more the Church strove to light the lantern of learning, the more it revealed the surrounding sombre darkness. In short, the more the Church tried to do to educate the children, so much the more was it made evident that its resources would prove inadequate to the vast task. The Church would be compelled, if ways could be found, to join forces with the State.

What would — what could — the State do?

II. PARTNERS WITH THE STATE

By the middle of the 19th century, when the Napoleonic threat was no longer the main preoccupation of our people, talk of a State system of education was one of the major items of national debate. In 1857 the Prince Consort voiced the misgivings of many people when he took the view "that rate-aided and compulsory education would never be acceptable or even be workable". But the tide of change was flowing more swiftly than men believed. In 1870 the Education Bill, introduced by Mr. W. E. Forster, became law and attendance at school was made compulsory.

Church Schools remained in existence as partly independent 'non-provided' schools while the State, through School Boards in each area, 'provided' elementary schools. The Act required that any local rate to support these schools should not exceed three-pence in the pound! So was created a partnership, a dual system which was a typical English compromise and which, with amendments, is still working a hundred years later. Children were now required by law to attend school and it was laid down that "the Bible should be read and that there should be religious education in all schools, guarded by a conscience clause for the children of dissenters".

Bexhill at this time was still only a small hamlet with about five hundred homes and two thousand inhabitants and, as a result, no School Board was elected. But this did not mean that no provision was made for the children.

Nearly a score of years before the passing of the Education Act of 1870, the Church in Bexhill, aware of the growing need for more and better teaching and assisted by the National Society, had as early as 1853 built St. Peter's 'National' School in Holliers Hill. Girls and Infants were admitted in 1862. In due course a separate school for Infants, the Wilson Memorial School was built in Barrack Road in 1884. The following year the Girls' Department was transferred from Holliers Hill to another new building also in Barrack Road.

There was still only one parish and so the then Rector (Rev. H. W. Simpson) was responsible for the whole area. He was much concerned about the needs of the small community at Little Common, especially the children, a few of whom were being taught the three R's in a small room. His son (Rev. J. H. Simpson) was appointed as curate in charge of Little Common in 1852 and three years later, with his father's support and encouragement, he was able to open St. Mark's Church School. It is surely significant that the School was built even before St. Mark's was created a separate parish. Care for the children has always been in the forefront of the Church's concern. This School served the community well for more than a century until it was replaced on a different site by the L.E.A. Primary School in 1961.

Bexhill was also extending in other directions. The child population in Sidley was growing and so, in 1865 a new Church School in All Saints Lane was provided. This too has served the locality for more than a century and has only recently been replaced by a new Primary School. Like many other places on the South Coast Bexhill began to expand with the coming of the railway. It was still largely the village on the hill at the top of Sea Road and the railway line at the bottom ran mainly through fields. But the coming of the train meant the building of more houses. There was much development to the south of the railway line and a new parish was created. St. Barnabas Church was built in 1891 and within two years provision had already been made for the educational needs of the children within its boundaries. In 1893 St. Barnabas Girls' School was erected at the corner of Western Road and its building is now our County Library. The School was visited by the Duchess of Teck in 1895 and in the following year she also presided at a Concert given to clear the debt on the School building. An Infants Department was added four years later and, in that same year 1897 the Boys' School was built in Reginald Road.

All this growth of Schools in Bexhill was of course a reflection of what was going on throughout the country. Education had become one of the chief 'talking points', at both local and government level and, with the exception of the war years has continued to be so from the turn of the century right up to the present time. This is shown in the successive Acts passed by Parliament. In 1902 Mr. A. J. Balfour's Education Act abolished School Boards after only thirty years and placed education on a municipal basis with a greater share in the rates. In 1918 Mr. H.A.L. Fisher's Education Act raised the age for leaving school while in 1926 the Hadow Report proposed that all elementary education should end at the age of 11 and be followed by a uniform system of secondary education.

There were some in Sussex who felt that the Church would be at a grave disadvantage unless prepared to embark on new plans for building secondary schools. But it was quickly recognised that, although it might be good theoretically for the Church to build such schools, as a practical proposition it was quite impossible. The high cost must inevitably preclude any such large-scale operation in the Diocese. So the Church in Sussex has concentrated on junior schools and not until the efforts of the Sussex Church Campaign, more than a generation later, did it prove possible to have a very small number indeed of Church secondary schools in the Diocese.

It is perhaps relevant to note that as late as 1938 the Church and the State were still fairly equal partners. There were approximately 10,000 schools 'provided' by the State and 8,500 'non-provided' schools belonging to the Church of England. But the coming of war and the passing of new legislation inevitably changed this. Towards the end of the war Mr. R. A. Butler's now famous Act of 1944 was passed, a far more comprehensive measure than any earlier Act. By it the State for the first time since its entrance into the field of education in 1870 required not only that religious instruction should be given in all its schools but that each day should begin with an assembly for a corporate act of worship. For this the Church must be grateful.

But the ceiling of requirement on which the government now insisted in regard to buildings and equipment posed a financial problem for the Church. In Sussex great efforts have been made both by the parishes and the diocese to upgrade their schools, many of which have for reasons already made clear been in existence for more than a century and therefore in many ways no longer adequate.

In many places the task of adapting or replacing has proved an impossible one and the Church, in an earlier century the senior partner, has had to yield to the State with its greater resources. As a result many 'Aided' Church Schools have become 'Controlled'. These fresh 'labels' replaced the former term of 'non-provided' Church School. In order to be aided the Church had to be able to find half the cost of building, of repairs and of alterations. She then retained all her former rights. If, however, in a particular place the Church was unable to meet the cost, the School became 'controlled' by the Local Education Authority. Although the school building still remained Church property the right to appoint the foundation managers, the teachers and other rights formerly held were withdrawn.

How acute the situation became in the smaller villages is made clear by a consideration of schools in the parishes of the Battle and Bexhill Deanery. In 1942, just before the passing of the Act there were eleven Church Schools. In 1977 there is only one 'Aided' Church School, eight 'Controlled' Church Schools and two have been closed. The one 'Aided' is that of St. Peter & St. Paul Junior School in Buckhurst Road, the School with which these pages are primarily concerned. How it came into existence as the successor to the old St. Peter's and St. Barnabas Schools will be the subject of subsequent chapters.



above: "Presentation of Purses 1956"

left: *Jump for Joy*

III. FROM PEACE TO WAR

A close study of the Log-books of the Head Teachers and the Minute-books of the Managers of the Schools reveals quiet but steady progress in the first half of the 20th century. Much of what is there is domestic and is just a record of the day-to-day activities of both children and teachers. Some of it would only have been of interest to those involved at the time, but occasionally what is written sounds humorous today, as when two young women who were being interviewed for appointment as assistant teachers were asked – "Are you aware that if you marry you will be called upon to resign?" They had no Women's Lib. then!

However it is clear that from an educational viewpoint great advances were being made. The young teachers coming from the expanding Training Colleges were far better equipped for their work. Greater freedom was given them to classify the children according to their attainments. New syllabuses were being drawn up, new experiments authorised and regular inspection required. Indeed a more liberal approach to the life and work of the school became evident. Physical, manual and craft training were given an increasingly important place and there was a growing concern for the general health and physique of the children with regular medical inspection and oversight.

The outbreak of war in 1914 must have caused excitement among the school children. They were encouraged to knit comforts for the wounded and for the Belgian refugees quartered in Bexhill. The presence of a Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment in the town and the increased activity of naval ships in the Channel, as well as the arrival of some Canadian troops were all of special interest, especially to the boys who made reference to them in their essays, but on the whole life went on as before with rationing and the possibility of seeing a Zeppelin or other enemy aircraft as familiar topics of the children's conversation.

These children, many of whom still live in Bexhill, now in retirement as respected senior citizens look back with pride to their years at school. They recognise not only the debt they owe to the years of devoted teaching they received but are grateful also for the discipline, often strict by the more easy-going standards of today, which helped to mould character and to fashion standards for daily living.

Both St. Peter's and St. Barnabas' Boys' Schools benefited from the very long periods of service as Headmaster of two quite remarkable men, Mr. E. Bunting and Mr. F. E. Poulton. The latter was appointed to the newly-built school in Reginald Road in 1898 and at once identified himself not only with the community life of the School but

also with the congregation of St. Barnabas Church. For sixty-five years he was involved in almost every church activity and held nearly every church office — acting in turn as Superintendent of the Sunday School, Captain of the Church Lad's Brigade, Churchwarden, representative on the Diocesan Council, Secretary of the Church Council and many other posts. He was an outstanding man, typical of the kind of service which has made our church schools what they are and he remained Headmaster for forty years. His lads, many of them now grandfathers, still speak of him with affection and gratitude for to them he exemplified the best type of churchman. He died aged 88 years.

In the same way Mr. Edwin Bunting served both St. Peter's School and Church for many long years and only died as recently as 1964 at the great age of 98 years. Mr. L. J. Bartley, the late Editor of the Bexhill Observer wrote of them — 'both exerted an immense influence for good on generations of boys, and the girls schools were no less notable for distinguished mistresses who set an outstanding example for which countless pupils were grateful through life. With the limited resources of those days wonders were indeed performed'.

Mention has already been made of the Hadow Report of 1926 which advocated a uniform system of primary and secondary education throughout the land. The Local Education Authority had already made a beginning with the opening of the first part of the Down Primary School for Juniors in 1907. The second part was completed just before the first World War began. The buildings were taken for military use and the children were moved to the western side of the Down to what later became St. Francis' School. After the war it became clear that the Authority would be forced to take definite action in the sphere of secondary education. The Grammar Schools were built in 1926 but the building of the Down Secondary School was again delayed by the second World War, and not until 1941 was even part of the new School brought into use as children began to return after evacuation.

The Church had already faced the fact that the creation of these new schools by the County would deprive her of boys and girls at the age of 11 plus and she would be left with juniors and infants only. A letter from the Town Clerk in April 1935 had made this quite clear and had underlined the fact that, even if the managers of the Church Schools were prepared to under-write the cost of a new church senior school, the child population of those over 11 plus was not large enough to warrant the building of two such schools by both Church and State.

Three factors in the long run made inevitable the final decision of the managers. (i) A deputation to the Board of Education met the response — you have the legal right to build, but the town is not large enough to operate the dual system in secondary education. (ii) A visit by H.M. Inspector in 1937 produced the Report — In general the premises you now have in use fall short of the generally prevailing standards and allow no provision on modern lines for seniors. (iii) The Diocese declared that its policy would be to give the major part of its limited financial aid and backing to Church Junior Schools and no help could be expected for Infant Schools or Secondary Schools. Managers would have to 'go it alone' if they wished to proceed with any such building plans.

Then suddenly — and for the second time — war came and in September 1939 all school plans — both Church and State — were immediately shelved for the duration. Urgent orders came to the Schools from the Board of Education. Bexhill was declared a reception centre and must be ready to receive 540 evacuees while more could be expected. They would have their lessons in the mornings while the local children would use the schools in the afternoons, each in shifts of three-and-a-half hours. On each half-day, when the children were not in school, they were to be engaged in occupational and communal activities — out of doors and in church halls under the direction of the teachers. This state of affairs continued during the months of the 'phoney' war when the situation in Europe seemed static.

Then suddenly and with great rapidity the German forces overran Holland and Belgium, turned the Maginot line and France capitulated. The British Expeditionary Force retreated from Dunkirk, Hitler had the Channel ports and the war was only twenty miles away! The school children from London who had been billeted in Bexhill since the outbreak of hostilities were hastily removed and on Sunday 21st July 1940 a large proportion of the local children were also evacuated with their teachers to Letchworth, Stevenage and St. Albans.

In August air raids became a daily and nightly occurrence. Bexhill suffered considerable damage and there was some loss of life while, in the following months, Sir Auckland Geddes, the Regional Commissioner, called for a voluntary evacuation of the civilian population because of the imminence of an attempted invasion. A major part of the population left Bexhill including nearly all the remaining children. The Church Schools — indeed all schools in the town — were closed and Bexhill was denuded of its children.



Parents' Interest



Parents' Evening

IV. WE MAKE-DO AND MEND

Even in war time, with all the dangers which daily beset south-coast towns, people were beginning to realise afresh that there is no place like home. Within six months of the evacuation the local press was reporting that 350 children had returned home and there was a possibility that the authorities would again have to make teaching provision for them. By February 1941 three schools had re-opened with six teachers for 503 children – a total considerably exceeding expectations and a group system of teaching was introduced. By the summer there were 724 children being taught in six Bexhill schools, much less than half the normal peace-time child population of 1800 and there was great concern about the protection of school children against tip-and-run raids. In due course the schools were provided with Anderson and Morrison air raid shelters.

By the end of August the local press was reporting that more children had returned and that the autumn term would begin with a scheme based on nearly 800 children and with a teaching staff of 19, nine of whom were being recalled from the reception areas in Hertfordshire. St. Peter's School in Barrack Road re-opened with 187 girls and infants and St. Barnabas School in Reginald Road with 128 boys and infants. Miss Wratten, the head teacher of St. Peter's was publicly thanked for the splendid work she had done in preparing this scheme for the town, a scheme which included Sidley, Little Common and the Down School as well.

The Rector (Rev. H. B. W. Denison) who as Chairman of the Joint Board of Managers had been active in trying to plan for the future of the schools in the post-war years was, at this critical time, appointed by the Bishop to Hartfield and was succeeded at the end of the year by Canon Godfrey Bell who, as Diocesan Secretary at Church House had a well-deserved reputation as an administrator. It was hoped that he would be able to initiate plans for the future of the Church Schools. It was, therefore, not surprising that within a few months of his appointment and in spite of war conditions he arranged a public meeting at the De La Warr Pavilion in April 1942. In his address of welcome to the two main speakers – the Bishop of Lewes and the Headmaster of Lancing – the Rector stressed that plans for re-building and remodelling the existing Church Schools had been well advanced and would have been carried out but for the war. However a new situation confronted the managers and therefore a fresh and ambitious reorganisation scheme would be essential. The meeting resolved to give full support to the idea of a new school after the war.

It was about this time that the decision was taken to sell the buildings of the Boys' School in Chantry Lane and the Girls' School in Western Road. They had unhappily not been included among those reopened after the evacuation. They were clearly redundant and no longer capable of being adapted on the existing sites to meet the requirements of the Board of Education. It was also decided to repaint and where necessary repair the remaining Church School buildings at a cost of £1000, but a letter from the Borough Surveyor warned that a building licence for the work might not be forthcoming owing to special war-time regulations. The one thing everyone was agreed about was that when hostilities ceased there must be a new School. In the meantime the Managers like everybody else would have to make-do and mend.

Towards the end of the war, which to the relief and joy of the whole nation occurred in the following year, Parliament passed the Education Act of 1944, far more comprehensive than any earlier legislation. The experiences of the war years had opened the eyes of all men of good will to the way in which secularism and humanism were spreading in Europe.

The Government made clear that a better national system of education was needed as a fundamental means of checking this spread in England and of helping the youth of the nation to new and better standards.

The introduction of the new Act seemed in every way the start of a new chapter in school life and it was significant that the change was marked by changes of head teachers. Mr. T. J. Mitchell, head of St. Barnabas Boys' resigned and was succeeded by Mr. Frank Frisby. Miss M. Wratten, a great character and a most loyal churchwoman, head of St. Peter's Girls' and Miss Bayne Smith, head of St. Peter's Infants' had both reached retiring age and resigned amid general acclaim and regret. The Managers received 110 applications for the vacant posts and they selected Miss W. Reeve for the Girls' School and Miss Lawrence for the Infants'.

With the return of all the children the problem of accommodation became acute. The Down School building, started before the war, was now available to meet the Secondary School requirements of the 1944 Act, but this involved the 'creaming off' of all 11 plus children from the Church Schools, a situation which was regretfully accepted by the Managers as inevitable. However, there was still the problem of the increasing number of infant places required due to the rise in the birth rate. The Director of Education for East Sussex had suggested that, as the Infants' School in Barrack Road was over full and there was a waiting list, it might be possible to accommodate some of the infants in the junior girls' school or, as an alternative that the old Belle Hill Chapel premises might be used.

The Managers, however, pointed out that if the expected average in-take was maintained, there would be no room for infants in the Girls' School and, in their opinion, the Belle Hill site was quite unsuitable for educational purposes and was moreover in a very dangerous position and a traffic hazard. They, nevertheless, agreed with the L.E.A. that some temporary reorganisation must be undertaken and that this would involve additional lavatory accommodation, some repair work and improvements to the playground surfaces. They agreed to carry out this work and to turn St. Peter's Girls' School into a Junior Mixed and St. Barnabas Boys' School into a Junior Mixed and Infants. For this latter School Mr. W. H. Rees was subsequently appointed as Headmaster. It was thus becoming increasingly evident that the new School required would have to be Junior Mixed and capable of accommodating at least 300 children.

Early in 1948 it was reported from Lewes that the Education Committee wished to press for the choice of a site for such a new Church School and suggested one of about five acres on land adjoining Upmeads. The Town

Council, on the other hand, regarded this as a potential residential area and suggested a site north of the Rectory and near to Wrestwood Road. At first sight both suggestions seemed to have disadvantages. The Wrestwood site would be a long way for children coming from the Sackville Road area and would involve the crossing of main roads. The Upmeads site, quiet and eminently suitable, would involve an exit into Upper Sea Road, one of the most congested traffic roads in the town. This would, however, be avoided if access could be obtained through King's Close. So began a debate which was to drag on for several years.

One of the requirements of the new Act was that Managers and Trustees responsible for 'voluntary' Schools would have to opt for 'aided' or 'controlled' status within a given period. It was clearly unwise, since within a measurable time St. Barnabas' Boys' School would cease to function, to spend further money on maintaining it. The Managers therefore decided to apply for 'aided' status for both St. Barnabas' and St. Peter's Schools with the legal right to build an entirely new School in substitution at some future time. In this way they were wisely keeping open their options while the educational prospect was still vague and in a state of flux.

By 1950, six years after the passing of the Act, the situation in Sussex — indeed in the whole country — still seemed uncertain. The Diocesan Director warned that, although the development plan for East Sussex had been approved by the Ministry of Education, individual schemes for particular schools might be subject to very considerable delay and that therefore any estimates of cost could only be provisional. No-one could forecast with any accuracy what might be the cost of building ten years hence, but an Act had been passed and in due course it had to be made to work. The Director stressed the diocesan policy of not supporting the building of new Infants' Schools since the children would only be in the hands of the Church for two years and, in any case, the funds available were limited. He added that, at present building prices the probable cost of a new Church Junior Mixed School to replace the existing St. Peter's and St. Barnabas' Schools was likely to be about £38,000 — a total which was to prove woefully short of the mark later on.

It was at this same meeting that the Director (Rev. Guy Mayfield) reported that the Roman Catholic Church was also proposing to build a new Church School in conformity with the Act, and to give it the name of St. Richard's School. This had been a name already in the minds of the Church School Managers and they now adopted the provisional title of St. Peter and St. Paul, although it was quite clearly understood and duly recorded that the new School would be for the Church children of Bexhill as a whole and not for one parish only. It was also explained that the Church Councils of the various parishes had promised to give full support to the Scheme.

From now on in the records of the Managers the name of the Rev. Hilton Wright becomes increasingly evident. As a member of both the East Sussex Education Committee and the Diocesan Education Committee, his advice and knowledge of the intricate legal requirements were to prove of great value. By the summer of 1951 the County Education Committee reported that at long last the Ministry had agreed to the new School being placed in the building programme for 1952–53 (later twice deferred to 1954/55) — and that the estimated cost would now be £51,700. Thus in less than eighteen months the figure had risen by nearly £14,000. Now, at long last the plans seemed near to fulfilment. The School was in the 'pipe line' and the tedious years of make-do and mend, of adapting, repairing and re-painting were coming to an end.

V. MAKING THE DREAM A REALITY

Fortified by the promise of the L.E.A. that the site would be forthcoming and of the Diocesan Education Committee that financial backing would be available, the Combined Board of Managers determined to press on with the appointment of an architect and to launch an Appeal to the church people of Bexhill for help with the large sum required to build a new School. Although not on the panel of architects submitted by the Diocese, the Managers appointed Mr. Hilton Wright Junior A.R.I.B.A. and invited him to submit plans based on the requirements of the site, a sloping one, and the needs of the proposed School, namely eight classrooms, assembly hall, ancillary offices, playground and playing fields. It was felt that, with his appointment, it would be helpful to have also the collaboration of Canon Hilton Wright and his close contacts with both County and Diocesan Authorities.

But at this stage a letter was received from the Ministry of Education with the information that, as the site for the School had not yet been acquired by the L.E.A. on behalf of the Managers, the proposed School had been dropped from the building programme of 1953/54. This was to prove only the first of many obstacles which stood in the way of the new School. The second was of even greater concern. The Town Council had earlier agreed that, when the site was acquired from the owner of Upmeads, a short access road could be constructed through a vacant plot in King's Close. The Managers were now informed that planning permission for the building of a house on this plot had been given by the local Planning Committee and that an alternative access would have to be found. A third grievous setback was the sudden death of the Chairman of the Managers, Canon Godfrey Bell, who had proved such an able leader during the difficult years. He was succeeded as Rector in Coronation year (1953) by the Rev. Clifford Earwaker. As a former schoolmaster and a Diocesan Inspector of Schools for ten years, it was felt that his experience of educational matters would prove of help in dealing with the building of the new Church School.

A fresh access in Buckhurst Road was acquired from the Trustees of Hollenden House, whose Secretary, Col. Swinton, was most helpful, but this was a much longer route and would require considerable 'building up' because of the height of the school site above the road. The cost of the road construction proved to be nearly five times as much as that envisaged for the shorter route. Shortly afterwards Canon Hilton Wright was obliged to resign through increasing ill-health and the Rector was elected to succeed him as Chairman. It was realised that when the new school

was in being, the professional future of the staff of the two existing schools would be uncertain. It was also clear that no appointments could be made until a new Instrument of Management for the proposed school had been authorised by the Ministry. It was decided that there should be twelve Managers — six representing the parishes of St. Peter's, St. Barnabas', St. Stephen's, All Saints, St. Augustine's and St. Andrew's; one from the Diocese; two from the Town Council; two from the County Council; and with the Rector of Bexhill *ex officio*.

At the first meeting of the new Managers in January 1955 it was decided to invite seven building firms to submit tenders for the building of the new School, to go ahead with arrangements for the public Appeal Meeting at the De La Warr Pavilion and to appoint a Head Teacher with a view to assembling a new staff. In due course Messrs. Llewellyns (Hastings) Ltd. submitted the lowest tender and this was accepted. A Clerk of the Works was then appointed and in April everyone heard with delight that we were in possession of the site and that work had at last started. The Rector was authorised to prepare an illustrated brochure commending the School Appeal to the Churches and to the general public. The Bishop of Chichester (Dr. G. K. A. Bell) gave full support and wrote in his Foreword "The School is built by the Church with the aid of the State in a strategic position in the Diocese. A Church School stands for religious education in the full sense of the word. That means instruction in the Faith of the Church, joining in the worship of the Church and sharing in its fellowship. The Diocese of Chichester believes very strongly in the building of this new School and is backing up its belief by a substantial contribution to the cost. It is with complete confidence that Church people in all the parishes of Bexhill will testify to their belief no less certainly, that I warmly endorse this Appeal". A number of distinguished and notable people in Sussex also gave support and associated themselves with the Appeal as did the then Mayor of Bexhill, Councillor Mrs. Joyce Alexander.

The public meeting took place in October with Dr. Bell, Mr. J. C. Dancy M.A., Canon R. Bailey (General Secretary of the National Society) and Mrs. Eric Coombs, a member of the Church Assembly and a former President of the Mothers' Union as Speakers. The Bishop heartened the large audience by promising that the Diocese would give aid by £1 for every £1 raised by Bexhill up to a total of £10,000. The 1944 Act gave encouragement to the Church to share with the State and so the Government was also giving substantial aid. The L.E.A. also wanted to help the Church and indeed wanted the Church to help them. "This" declared the Bishop "is at once an enterprise and a challenge and I have no doubt at all that in Bexhill you will make a real effort and sacrifice in order to do your part". He was enthusiastically supported by vigorous addresses from the other Speakers.



Country Dancing in the Hall



Sports Day

VI. THE SCHOOL TAKES SHAPE

It is really not surprising that it took so long to translate the new School from discussion and drawing board into bricks and mortar. The problems involved were, of necessity, very complex, concerning as they did, at different levels of responsibility, the Managers, the Parishes, the Diocese, the County Council, the Town Council and above all the Ministry of Education. All their wishes, decisions and instructions had now to be given concrete form by the architect. Above all the Managers were watching with considerable disquiet the ever-rising spiral of costs. As already noted in an earlier page, they had been advised in 1950 that at least £38,000 would be required. By 1953 this had risen to £51,700 and in 1955, with the contract signed and the work begun, they had to face the cruel fact that the School and site would now cost over £70,000 with of course 50% of help from the Government.

Some of the problems which confronted the architect are best described in his own words "The site chosen for the School is in the centre of the town on high ground between the Old Town and the Railway Station. It is on some of the highest land in the town and from it there are fine views over Bexhill and along the whole sweep of the Bay to Beachy Head. A more delightful setting for a School could hardly be found. The site, however, has one great difficulty, that of access. It is surrounded on three sides by other property and on the fourth side, where it has a considerable frontage to Upper Sea Road, it is at a much higher level than the road and access is almost impossible. It has been necessary, therefore, to find an approach to the site over the land of surrounding property and eventually such an

entrance was acquired by private agreement from the Trustees of Hollenden House. The site itself forms part of the Upmeads Estate and has an area of 5.18 acres including the approach and the playing fields. The approach road winds around the western boundary of the grounds of Hollenden House and, owing to the very steep slope, the road has had to be embanked".

The Managers required a two-form entry school of eight classes for 320 children with a large assembly hall to serve also as a dining room, together with kitchen, cloakrooms, lavatories and staff rooms. The classrooms were to be on two floors with a linking corridor at a level half-way between. This was made necessary by the sloping site, but it also meant that children going to the lavatories would only have a half-flight of stairs to traverse. There were also to be courtyards and a nature pool on the ground floor. These would be paved and terraced in order to provide outdoor teaching areas. The assembly hall is the focal centre of the school and sliding glazed screens separate it from the entrance hall, thus allowing increased hall accommodation for functions when parents are present. The architect also cleverly arranged that the first-floor corridor to the staff rooms should be open on one side and thus serve as a gallery to the assembly hall.

With school meals so large a feature of modern school life, great care was taken to have the most up-to-date kitchen facilities. The heating and hot water is supplied from two oil-fired boilers with individual calorifiers to serve the kitchen and lavatories. Summer heating of water is by electricity and the all-electric cooking equipment is to the latest Ministry of Education requirements so as to make it suitable for the 'family service' of meals. Service is by means of hatches direct from the kitchen into the hall. From the very beginning the school dinner service was to prove absolutely first-rate and the school has been well served by capable and loyal domestic staff.

It was decided that no use would be made of modern prefabrication methods and the School has been built in a largely traditional style using timber where possible rather than steel and reinforced concrete which tend to be vulnerable to the effect of sea air. The work of building proceeded apace and, in the summer of 1955, all seemed to promise well, but a new hazard to the progress of the School suddenly appeared. The owner of an adjacent property laid claim to a tenancy over the strip of land which formed the new access road, which the managers had purchased with vacant possession and on which indeed excavation for drainage was already in progress. The Trustees of Hollenden House were urgently approached. They said that while it was true that verbal permission had much earlier been given to this lady for her chickens to run over this strip of land, nevertheless any such tenancy had in fact been terminated a year earlier. This was rejected by her solicitor who threatened to (and indeed did!) erect a barrier and initiate litigation.

This held up the builders and would have inevitably involved the Managers in very considerable expense since the contractors would have been compelled to charge a substantial sum for plant standing idle on the site. Counsel's opinion was sought and it was quite clear that in any legal proceedings the Managers would certainly be vindicated, but the legal process would be protracted, perhaps taking months and compensation to the builders for the stand-still would be considerable. He therefore advised offering compensation to the claimant and the erection of a new boundary fence for her. To this the Managers most reluctantly agreed and, as a result, the barrier was removed and the work proceeded but not without several weeks of delay. This unhappy episode was a little relieved by the news that the cost of the compensation would rank for 50% grant. As if this were not enough by way of obstacle, at this very point the Clerk of the Works offered his resignation. He was a London man and found the burden of travelling too great; his successor, Mr. E. G. Cooper, was appointed and proved an excellent choice, staying on the job until the School was completed.

However, things were moving in other directions. A sub-Committee had considered the many applications for the Headship of the new School and made a short list. These candidates were interviewed and Miss W. H. Reeve was appointed. Subsequently a teaching staff (of six women and two men together with a school secretary) was appointed. It was later realised that a deputy head who would have to be one of the men would also have to be appointed. The Managers heard with pleasure that Mr. W. H. Rees who had served as headmaster of St. Barnabas' School during a most difficult period had also been offered a fresh appointment by the L.E.A. With a new teaching staff nominated it was now time to turn to the children.

In addition to those of 7-11 years in the two existing Schools who would automatically transfer to the new School it was publicly announced that church parents with children of the appropriate age and living anywhere in the borough of Bexhill might apply for entry and application forms were made available.

The final meeting of the old combined Board of Managers was held on July 10th 1956. The members were informed that the new School was nearing completion and although certain minor work still needed to be done the building would be ready for the children in September, the beginning of the new term. The Treasurer was able to report a donation to the Appeal Fund from the Bishop of Lewes and a further gift of £2000 from the P.C.C. of St. Peter's. So with the thanks of the Chairman to all members and especially those who would not be serving as Managers of the new School under the fresh Instrument of Management, the Combined Board went out of existence after many years of loyal and faithful work for the children of the Church.

VII. A ROYAL OPENING

It was indeed a happy omen that the year in which the new School opened saw also the opening by the Church of England of 'Operation Firm Faith', a project launched throughout the land by the Queen with her good wishes 'to all who will be working to ensure that the great truths of the Christian Faith are well and firmly taught in our schools

and in our homes'. Indeed the Queen was herself about to open a new Church School in South London. It was therefore with very great pleasure that the Rector was able to announce that H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester had expressed her willingness to come to Bexhill and officially open the new Church School on All Saints' Day (1st November 1956).

The term actually started on the 4th September and the School began its life with the Ministry official No. 237 (later changed to 3340) and the title Bexhill Church of England Junior School. A considerable time was to elapse before the title proposed by the Managers – St. Peter and St. Paul School – was to be approved by the new Bishop and accepted by the Ministry. There were still nearly 50 workmen active on the premises – mainly on the Kitchens, where work had been delayed by bad weather and some equipment had still to be installed. Considerable help was given towards completing the work by Miss Tolmie, the County Organiser for school meals. The classroom furniture was already in position and the head teacher and her eight new colleagues all went in the previous day to ensure that everything was in readiness for the reception of the children and that lessons could begin immediately.



above: *Duchess of Gloucester & Miss W. H. Reeve at Official Opening*

left: *Classroom Jubilee project 1977*

It was a fine Autumn morning when the excited and happy children arrived. The Rector welcomed them and took the Assembly and prayers in the playground so as not to hold up the workmen in the hall. The hymns were led by a violin! The mid-day meal had to be served in the Victoria Hall, the school dinners being provided from the Central Kitchen and this arrangement continued for a number of days until the school's own kitchen equipment was ready for use.

From the very beginning the children went to Church each Thursday morning and the clergy attended school to take the religious teaching on three mornings a week. This has continued as an important and vital part of the life of the School. There was, of course, considerable excitement among the children when they were told about the royal opening and time was given to learn a programme of special songs to be tape recorded and broadcast to the assembled audience on the day. This of course was when a tape-recorder was a novelty and the technique was in its infancy. Nowadays every School has such instruments and they feature largely in modern methods of learning. By the end of the month life at School was becoming normal. The workmen disappeared, the hall was free for use as the dining room and 180 hot meals were being served daily. That they were 'punctual and appetising' is recorded in the Head Teacher's Log Book!

The Managers had failed to realise how much a royal visit involves formal protocol. It was discovered that the presence of a number of V.I.P.s could be expected on the day – Lord Lieutenant, High Sheriff, Member of Parliament, Mayor and Corporation, not to mention the County's education Committee officials as well as the Bishop and the Archdeacon.

Some of those who had so generously supported the Appeal with donations to help build the School also expected an invitation; and what about the children and their parents? A very carefully prepared and representative list of invitations was drawn up and inevitably led to disappointment in some quarters; but those children not in the Hall were allowed to line the route into the School with their flags and an Open Day for the public was arranged for the following day for all who wished to see the new building. The last day of October saw great activity. The churchwardens of St. Peter's led a group of volunteers in arranging and labelling the seating in the Hall and on the platform. Thanks to Mr. J. Shields the Parks' Department very kindly decorated the stage with banked flowers on loan from the Town Council. The gallery had been decorated by the children, some of whom had embroidered towels with the royal monogram for use if required by the Duchess.

So the great moment arrived and at exactly 3 o'clock on All Saints' Day the Duchess and her Lady-in-Waiting arrived. To the cheers of the waiting children, they were greeted by the Duke of Norfolk and the Mayor. After the other members of the platform party had been presented all moved into the Hall where for half-an-hour the assembled audience had been listening to the recorded songs of the children. After the singing of the National Anthem all eyes were focussed on two of the children as they came forward. Little Linda Gordon presented a bouquet of red roses to the Duchess and the royal visitor also received souvenir gifts for her two sons Prince William and Prince Richard. The gifts were silver propelling pencils in leather cases and were presented by Peter Gurney.

In welcoming the Duchess the Rector said that the occasion was for everyone associated with the School one of the happiest of days, for it marked the culmination of a great deal of patient endeavour. Much labour and sacrifice had been required to bring to fruition the plans of which the visit of the Duchess was the keystone. There had been many who had planned and there would be many who would teach and learn in this place. For all of these today would be a milestone. He added – When I tell you that for more than ten years people have worked to build this School you will know that it sometimes seemed a dream incapable of fulfilment, but you have set the seal on our endeavours. I offer you, in the name of all associated with this School, a most sincere, loyal and affectionate welcome and ask you to declare the School open.

The Duchess was then invited to receive purses from other schools in the Borough. Bexhill has a long educational tradition with more than thirty schools in the town. The happy relationship between Church schools, State schools and Independent schools was clearly indicated by the most generous help coming from so many of them. Although only five boys and girls presented purses they represented a total of 24 Schools. The first purse was presented by a pupil of the new School Zena Dare, followed by Josephine Goodburn, head girl of Charters Towers. Next came three younger children from those Infant Schools from which ultimately the new School would draw many of its pupils. They were Brian Toghill of All Saints, Jillian Warner of the Chantry School and Jane Owers of the Down Infants'. The purses were beautifully made by Fiona Chard a senior student of Colwell Court.

The Duchess in reply offered her thanks for the kind welcome and for the beautiful pencils for her two sons. "It gives me great pleasure to come here today to open your School. I feel convinced that in these difficult days the educational work of the Church has become more important than ever and I am looking forward shortly to seeing this 'latest word' in school planning. In order to celebrate this important day I would ask for an extra day's holiday later on in the term".

The company then stood while the Bishop of Chichester said the prayers of dedication. He was followed by the headmistress who invited the Duchess to be the first to sign the Visitors' Book – and with a smile she wrote – 'Alice'. Later on, when some of the younger children were shown the book, one of them commented 'Hasn't the Queen's Auntie got a surname?' The Bishop in proposing thanks to the Duchess said that this was not only a Royal occasion it was also a Civic and a Church occasion. It was Royal and as such it illustrated the great interest taken by all the Royal family in the education of the young people of the nation. It was Civic because the building of a new School was a contribution to the total life of the community and the School owed a great deal to the help of the L.E.A. and in particular the Chief Education Officer; it was also a Church occasion for it represented a partnership between the Diocese and the churchpeople of Bexhill. A very large sum of money had been raised and it was a splendid illustration of Church loyalty and support. Thanks were also expressed by the Mayor, Councillor Carter, who told the Duchess. 'I am sure that your visit will be an ever-present inspiration to the teaching staff and the children.'

Leaving the Hall, the Duchess was conducted to the vestibule to unveil a commemorative stone plaque. She toured the classrooms and then withdrew to the staff room for tea and later the teachers were presented to her. Meanwhile the assembled visitors had tea in the main hall, all the cakes and sandwiches having been prepared by the School catering staff. They were much pleased when the Duchess made an unscheduled visit to the Kitchen and spoke to them. She was most impressed by all that she saw and much admired the up-to-date and efficient equipment. A little after 4 p.m. the Royal visitor left the School. The children furled their flags and departed. Thus ended a most historic day in the life of the School.

VIII. GROWTH AND EXTENSION

By the following year the School had grown in numbers to 310, but was later to fall victim to the prevailing bout of Asian 'flu and there was a week in which 65 children were absent. In the summer considerable emphasis was placed on swimming lessons and by the end of the term more than one-third of the children could swim at least ten yards. This has continued as an important feature in the School because it is regarded as vital that children living in a seaside town should be competent swimmers.

As the School had a woman head teacher, Ministry regulations required that in a mixed School the Deputy Head should be a man and quite early on the Managers appointed Mr. S. Laffar to this post. When in 1958 the Bishop of Chichester (Dr. Bell) retired Bishop Roger Wilson succeeded him. Soon after his enthronement he came to Bexhill and insisted on visiting the School and seeing every classroom. He enquired about the cost of the new building and was told that the final figure was £74,867 nearly twice the estimated cost seven years earlier. Of this total the Ministry of Education had met £38,894 and the Diocese £10,127. Bexhill's share had proved to be £25,846 of which £5,115 still needed to be raised.

Several special efforts were made towards this. St. Augustine's Church led by its energetic Vicar, Rev. E. A. Stone, who served the School in so many ways, was first in the field and raised £1,000. A School Fair was held in the Playground and raised £336 in an afternoon and later £270 in donations. A Grand Concert in the De La Warr Pavilion on 10th November 1958 brought together nearly all the Schools in the Town in a corporate effort, supported by the Bexhill Citizens Orchestra and other local musicians. This was a truly happy occasion when more than 1000 boys and girls with parents and friends filled the Pavilion. The Grammar Schools, the Down Secondary Schools, Ancaster House and Charters Towers all contributed to a splendid programme in which the highlight was the beautifully costumed Totem Dance from 'Rose Marie' performed by seniors from the Girls' Grammar School. This united effort revealed the community spirit of Bexhill at its highest and a visitor commented 'there was something for everybody'.

Early in 1959 the Rector was appointed to the New Town of Crawley and was succeeded as Chairman by the Rev. E. A. Stone. By the end of the year the School had once more grown to 325 children and the interest shown by the parents in the progress of the school led to preliminary discussion about the possible formation of a Parents Association and it was indeed the school's enthusiasm which led some of the parents to band together in support of the introduction of a Learners' Swimming Pool in the grounds. This was installed in 1965 by Purley Pools Ltd. and has proved a valuable asset to the School. The basic cost was met by the L.E.A. while the parents assisted with labour and funds. The Head Teacher, Miss Reeve, was not only extremely interested in getting as many children as possible to learn to swim; she saw also that the day would come when Britain would be much more involved in the community life of Europe and she was eager to have the children learning some French before they moved on to the secondary school. Her enthusiasm led to two new ventures. With two of her colleagues she took thirty-two of the fourth-year children to camp at Dieppe and the L.E.A. gave permission for a preliminary French course to be started in the School. Later on Miss Reeve was granted leave for a term in order to attend a special course at the University of Besancon.



above: *Opening of Swimming Pool
July 1965*

left: *Dedication of new extension*

The Deputy Head, Mr. S. Laffar, left in the summer of 1965 to become Headmaster of Alfriston School and was succeeded by Mr. M. C. Walker, one of the original members of the teaching staff who has now completed 21 years of devoted service to the School. Two important events took place in the following year. The 900th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings was celebrated in this area and the children paid visits to Pevensey Castle, Hastings Museum and Battle Abbey as part of a lesson-project illustrating this; while in the autumn the Queen, accompanied by Prince Philip, visited Bexhill and the School lined the route of the royal party.

At the end of the summer term 1971 Miss Reeve retired after 15 years as head of the School and twenty-six years in all as head of different schools under the East Sussex County Council — a splendid record. Her 'farewell' was marked by the children with an end-of-term 'Western style' party including cowboy songs and square dancing, while the children paraded in appropriate cowboy costume.

The Managers appointed Mr. Alan J. Morton, Headmaster of Wiggshall St. German's School, Kings Lynn, to succeed her. He began in the autumn term and at once involved himself fully in the life of the School. Very soon he raised afresh the question of extending the school. The problem was two-fold. How best could we deal with the growing number of applications for admission to the school and at the same time reduce the number of children per class? The ideal plan would be to have four more classrooms so that we should have a 3-form entry school. If the Ministry insisted on two phases in building because of financial stringency, then Phase I might include two classrooms, a larger staff room and additional toilets. In any case it turned out that, although the Managers and the L.E.A. both wished for 36 children to a class, the Ministry required that there should be 40 at present. In March 1972 the

Managers appointed Messrs. Callow & Burstow as architects for the projected scheme with a provisional limit of expenditure of £20,000. This figure, as with the original building, was to prove very much an under-estimate.

About this time the Rev. E. A. Stone resigned as Chairman, a post he had held for twelve years, together with that of Correspondent. His service to the school in so many ways had been outstanding. He was followed by the Rector, Canon M. D. Townroe. In the summer of the same year Mr. Morton achieved his long expressed wish to have heating for the swimming pool and, thanks to the efforts of the parents, who organised an ambitious Fair to raise funds, it was installed and ready for use at the beginning of the autumn term.

A new system of local government came into operation in 1974. Bexhill ceased to be a Borough with its own Council and became part of the Rother District, with the result that the school was now placed under the Hastings Education Committee. It was at this time of change that the diocese had a new Bishop and Dr. Eric Kemp came to visit the school. Like his predecessor he asked about the financial situation and was told that the cost of the extension had proved to be £46,274 of which 10% had to be found by the Managers. Towards this St. Barnabas' Church had already raised £1000 and a Fete in aid of the Appeal was held at the School. Under the leadership of the Rector the remainder of the money was quickly raised.



above: *The Butterfly Border – Conservation Year 1970*

left: *Unveiling of Plaque – Headmaster, Bishop & Rector*

Early in the following year the builders, Messrs. Eldridge & Cruttenden, completed the new extension and the classrooms were ready for use by the children. A special service of dedication was held on the 4th July 1975 when, in the presence of the Clergy of the town, Canon Langton, Diocesan Director of Education, with the children and the staff, the Bishop of Lewes dedicated the new extension and unveiled a commemorative plaque.

For a long time the Managers had hoped to extend the road leading up to the school so as to institute one-way traffic. An approach was made to Hollenden House and the Trustees agreed to act with the Managers in creating a fresh exit through their own grounds. The L.E.A. supported this plan and the extension road, together with increased parking facilities, has added considerably to the amenities of the School.

The School has been further enriched by a series of panels forming a triptych and painted by Mr. Desmond McAsey, a student at the Eastbourne College of Education. These are illustrations of the main seasons of the Christian Year and form a focal point for the children's worship at the morning Assembly.

Now the School has come of age – 1956 – 1977. What of the future? Twenty-one years old! – and a generation of children has passed through its doors and benefited from its teaching and guidance. The preceding pages of this modern School's story, set against its ancient background, make plain the Church's continuing and caring concern for her children – your children. The Church has always been in the forefront of education. Even though no longer the senior partner and recognising that the State will play an increasing and major role in the years to come, it is vital that we should strive to spread Christian influence in our society.

There are all too many complaints about 'youth today' and much of the problem is because the truths and the standards of the Christian faith are not known and practised. This School – and every Church School in the land – exists not only to teach Christianity but to build up a truly worshipping and committed community. This School exists to serve your boys and girls. Will you, the parents and friends of these children and you who are members of the Churches of Bexhill, also try to help them and to share with the teachers and clergy our great responsibility for the children who will be the citizens of tomorrow?



School & playground, overlooking Bexhill



The Staff, July 1977

Mrs. Merson Mr. Dixon Mr. James Mrs. Spencer
 Mrs. Harmer Miss Eldridge Mrs. Knight Miss Bubbings
 Mrs. Tuffin Miss Le Gallienne Mrs. White Mrs. Eldridge
 Mrs. Nolan Dep. Head Mr. M. C. Walker
 The Headmaster, Mr. A. J. Morton

